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Israel orders deportation of PLO suspect

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JERUSALEM — Israeli military authorities ordered a suspected Palestinian underground activist to be deported from the occupied West Bank yesterday.

It was the first time in more than five years that the occupation authorities have issued a deportation order. The move comes as a crack-down on Palestinian suspects in the occupied territories is gaining momentum and methods criticized by the United States are being increasingly used.

The deportation order, signed by Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak, the Israeli military commander of the occupied West Bank, was delivered to Halli Abu Ziad, the owner of a book shop in East Jerusalem, the predominantly Arab half of the city.

The papers, delivered to Mr. Abu Ziad's home in Bethany on the outskirts of Jerusalem shortly after midnight, gave him 48 hours to appeal the deportation order to the Israeli high court.

Mr. Abu Ziad's lawyer, an Israeli named Amnon Zichroni, said he would seek an injunction from the high court asking for more time to prepare a case challenging the deportation order as a violation of the Geneva Conventions pertaining to the inhabitants of occupied territory.

"The way the court rules will determine whether the government will be able to use expulsion as a punishment," Mr. Zichroni said yesterday.

The military order for Mr. Abu Ziad's deportation yesterday was the first time the punishment has been invoked by Israeli authorities since 1980, when two West Bank mayors were expelled to Jordan.

The military here issued a statement yesterday accusing the book shop owner of having been involved in Palestinian underground activity since as long ago as 1970.

In 1982, according to military sources here, Israeli intelligence discovered that Mr. Abu Ziad had constant contact with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's deputy, Abu Jihad, and he was placed under house arrest.

But according to the military statement, Mr. Abu Ziad continued

to participate in Palestine Liberation Organization activities.

Israeli authorities have not publicly tied Mr. Abu Ziad to any specific incident. He could not be reached for comment and was not found at his home yesterday.

One knowledgeable Palestinian source in Jerusalem expressed some surprise that the authorities had fixed on the book shop owner.

"This man has not been active in the past few years," the source said.

The deportation of Mr. Abu Ziad was the latest in a series of punitive measures against Palestinians that the government has undertaken in the last week under intense public pressure following Arab attacks on Jews in the occupied territories.

Last Sunday the Israeli cabinet announced it would make more stern use of existing laws to deal with terrorist and underground activity, reviving emergency laws that have been on the books since 1945 and that ironically were promulgated by the British to deal with Jewish underground activists in Palestine.

The United States has condemned the use of these measures, which include detention of suspects without charge — a measure that has been invoked in half a dozen cases in the last week — deportation and the destruction of homes of suspects and their families.

In another ironical twist, the British government, which introduced the measures in Palestine, also condemned their use against Palestinian Arabs yesterday.

The criticism has not deterred the Israelis, however, as yesterday's deportation order demonstrated.

Earlier in the week, Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli vice premier and foreign minister, said he hoped deportations would not be stalled by legal procedures.

"I would prefer a more accelerated and more convincing expulsion procedure to be decided on, without unnecessary formal delays," he said.